

St. Mary's High School Senior Spends 4 Years on 'Ham' Project

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Pure purpose . . . an exciting thing to find in the young. For one whose lifetime hobby has been "to know a little bit about a lot of things" tremendous challenge is generated in being with John Kober, St. Mary High School senior. Here is a young man with singleness of purpose. He has spent the past four years gathering technical knowledge and know-how . . . to become an amateur radio operator . . . "ham."

Sparked in the eighth grade by the enthusiasm of the Rev. Richard Shaefer, former administrator at St. Mary, and Sister

Mary Lunena, mathematics teacher and a "ham" in her own right, John's interest has grown. As a member of the Radio Club at St. Mary he studied for a year and a half to pass his Federal Communications Commission tests; and learned International Morse code which he had to be able to send and receive at the rate of 13 words per minute, minimal requirement.

\$400 Loan

As set forth by the advisors of the Radio Club, John began his building by arranging a loan of \$400 from his parents. This was made with the understanding that the money is to be

paid back, without commercial interest, upon John's graduation from college. Meanwhile his parents own his radio laboratory equipment. He has been licensed by the FCC for the past two years and is an enthusiastic participant in the "round microphone" Sunday evening ses-

sions the "hams" have in this area.

There is no mistaking the serious intent of this young man. He is a dedicated subscriber to the FCC's sole purpose . . . to help in emergency. The work is fun and the fun is work, in a manner of speaking. Three general descriptions of how such equipment is put together portrays the daily devotion John gives his interest.

'Home Brew'

Some of his equipment is "surplus," purchased from an army surplus store. There is also some

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"commercial gear," units and/or parts purchased from radio suppliers. Then there is the "home brew" parts and units . . . made by John and a good part of his "bedroom studio" consists of "home brew" equipment. It is less expensive and more often than not a challenge to construct. The original loan has been supplemented by a continuous process of buying, selling and swapping.

John is one of over 60 amateur operators in the Neenah-Menasha area . . . all observe the "common courtesies of the air waves." There is no restriction as to time of transmitting. Frequently he talks with amateurs in Europe . . . contact is not easily made and the reception seldom lasts over a minute or two, strong and clear. There is a ham's interpreter manual which permits the exchange of greetings in any tongue around the world.

Graduating in June this year, John then will attend the University of Wisconsin, Fox Valley Center, majoring in electrical engineering.



At the controls of his amateur transmitter, John Kober, logs an evening program from a fellow "Ham." A St. Mary High School senior and member of the Radio Club at his school, John has been adding to this station as time and money permit the past four years.



Adding a Few Hours to a busy daily schedule, John Kober works on the new unit which will give him single side band transmission. This will enable him to speak conversationally with other amateurs, shutting off when each of the operators has finished a question or statement. This is his Advanced Science Project for the year.